

THE LONDONDERRY SIFTER.

"When yellow sands are sifted from below, the glittering billows give a golden show."

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one warranted. All kinds of bar-

ter taken at cash prices in ex-

change for goods.

The Fountain of Life.

The Fountain of Life! It sparkles,
Its diamond jets on high,
Till its waters, clear and pure,
Reflect on the azure sky.

The Graybeard sits and watches
His treasures with jealous care,
Watches and waits for visitors—
Visitors pure and rare.

For he who would drink of the fountain
Must pass the portal of bliss;
Its passage is rock and empy,
Surrounded by precipice.

And he who would drink of its waters
That sparkles so clear and bright,
Must live the life of the righteous,
For the righteous never die.

—Philadelphia Call.

JOAB'S RUSE.

It was a bleak, bitter-cold Decem-
ber night. The frozen boughs of the
buttonball-tree rattled in the keen
blast. The ground was tight-fettered
in a cruel black frost.

Now and then the sickly moon
struggled through the bars of cloud,
illuminating the dreary landscape for
an instant, and then, as if discouraged,
vanished once again into the black,
vaporous masses.

Joab Millson sat before the fire,
looking into its blazing heart. A
feeble candle burned on the table, but
otherwise the farmhouse kitchen was
quite dark.

There was a tall, wooden clock in
one corner, garlanded with the bitter-
sweet berries which had not yet lost
their autumn splendor, and a monster
Jerusalem cherry tree, studded with
tiny scarlet globes, occupied the win-
dow.

And honest Joab had just laid aside
the last week's paper, with his specta-
cle-case on top of it, as his wife came down
stairs.

He looked up.
"Well," said he, "how is she?"
"She's dead!" said Mrs. Millson.

"Dear, dear!" said the kind-hearted
old farmer. "Dead, is she? And poor
little Iris—what is to become of her?"

"I think you'd a great deal better
say 'poor me,'" exclaimed Mrs. Millson,
founcing into a chair, in extreme irri-
tation, "with three weeks' board un-
paid and not a cent left!"

"Not a cent, eh?" repeated Mr. Mil-
lson.

"She told me a deal just before she
died," said the farmer's wife. "She ran
away from her friends to marry Iris'
father, and he died and left her when
Iris was a baby. And then her folks
wouldn't have anything more to say to
her. And she has supported the child
ever since, the best she could."

"Poor thing!" repeated Joab, whose
heart was as gentle as his manners,
were uncouth. "I might ha' known
from the haggard look in her face that
she had been troubled."

"Three weeks' board, to say nothing
of the medicines I paid for, and the
doctor's bill!" said Mrs. Millson.

"Folks oughtn't to be sick if they can't
pay their way! It's what I call down-
right swindling!"

"Where is Iris?" asked Joab.

"Asleep, upstairs."

"Don't she know her mother is dead?"

"No!" snappishly retorted Mrs. Mil-
lson. "Where was the use of calling
her? Ain't there trouble and confu-
sion enough a'ready?"

"Poor dear!" said Joab, mechanically
rubbing his knees—"poor dear! It'll
be a blow to her."

"I shall see Mr. Griggitt up at the
asylum, to-morrow," said Mrs. Mil-
lson. "Of course, the town will bury Mrs.
Brooke."

"That's 'most a pity, ain't it, my
dear?" said Joab. "She was a proud-
spirited feller, that Mrs. Brooke."

"Poor folks ha'n't no business to be
proud," said Mrs. Millson.

"Rebecca," said the farmer insinuat-
ingly, "couldn't we—"

"No, we couldn't!" sharply inter-
rupted his wife. "We, indeed!—with
that thousand dollars we owe to Mun-
son Miner, and the mortgage on the
farm eating up our means as fast as
ever it can. Haven't we done enough
for this woman a'ready?"

"She paid her board as long as she
could," mildly expostulated Millson.

"Then she'd ought to have left off
feelin' when she couldn't pay her way
no longer," said Mrs. Millson.

"Yes, but—"

"I've made up my mind," shortly
enunciated Mrs. Millson. "This here
house ain't a free charity. I shall see
the selectmen to-morrow, and Mr.
Griggitt into the bargain. I don't
suppose I'll ever get that board money,
but I don't mean to throw another
cent after it."

At that moment a little, shivering,
white-robed figure appeared at the
door—the figure of a child of ten, with
auburn gold hair streaming down her
back, large blue eyes, and cheeks crimson-
ed with grief and terror.

"Mamma!" she cried. "I dreamed
that mamma called me!—and they
won't let me into the room. Oh, Mrs.
Millson, is she dead?"

"Iris, go back to your room at once!"
said Mrs. Millson sharply. "Yes, of
course she's dead! What else would
you expect? Go back to bed—you
can't do no good!"

But the honest farmer, melted by
the child's look of wild, dumb distress,
opened wide his arms.

Iris Brooke flew into them, and burst
into a wild tempest of sobs and tears,
with her face buried on his shoulder.

"Now, what is the use of that?"
said Mrs. Millson, impatiently. "If
you was to cry a gallon measure full,
you couldn't bring her back; and it's
downright folly of Millson to encourage
it."

"But what am I to do without
mamma?" pleaded the child. "Where
am I to go?"

"To the asylum, to-be-sure!" prompt-
ly answered Mrs. Millson, needless of
her husband's gestures for silence.

"And be thankful that the town finds
so good a home as that for you. Now,
Millson, you needn't be grinning at
me in that sort of a way. Facts is
facts, and I'm only speaking for the
child's own good!"

"I'd rather die," breathed Iris in so
low a tone that only Joab Millson
heard the shuddering syllables. "Oh,
please don't send me there!"

The child's pathetic words served
only to strengthen a resolve that was
gradually forming in the farmer's
kindly heart.

"Becky," he said next morning, to
his wife, "don't send to the asylum
authorities until I have been to the
city. I'll see Mrs. Brooke's folks. You
say you found their address among her
papers?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Millson. "But she
told me herself they wouldn't have
nothing to say to her since she married
against their will. Where's the use of
spending time and money to—"

"Death is a wonderful softener,"
said Joab. "I shouldn't be surprised
if they'd be willin' to do something for
the little gal, arter all. Anyhow it's
worth tryin' for."

His expedition, however, proved ut-
terly fruitless. Mrs. Brooke's relatives,
—a sour-faced old maid and a dirty-
hearted ship-broker—were inexorable.

"She made her own bed," said one.
"Now let her lie upon it!"

"I warned her just how things would
turn out," said the other. "I told her
I washed my hands of her and her
concerns. And I am not one to go
back from my word. What's that you
say? The little girl is not to blame? I
am not chopping logic with you, my good
man. I am simply stating my determi-
nation to have nothing to do with either
Charles Brooke's wife or daughter.
Good morning."

Joab Millson came back home with
his mind made up.

"Which is worst," said he to himself
"to tell a little fib—a 'pious fraud,' the
elder would call it, I s'pose—or to be a
selfish brute. One thing's certain! I
ain't goin' to let little Iris be sent to
any asylum! And Rebecca's one of
them women as has got to be managed."

"Well," Mrs. Millson said, as he got
out of the old box wagon that had
been sent to the depot to meet him,
"What did they say?"

"Well," said Joab, with a little twist
of his features, "it ain't convenient
for them to receive Iris just now. But
we are to keep her."

"On what terms?" said Mrs. Millson
crisply.

"Six dollars a week," declared Joab,
inventing as he went on.

"That ain't unreasonable," said Mrs.
Millson, complacently. "But about
her clothes and schooling?"

"Oh, we're to supply all that, and
they'll pay us!"

"They give me money to pay for it,"
said Joab, who had stopped at the bank
on his way back and drawn out all his
little floating balance of cash.

"Well, I declare," said Mrs. Millson,
with a gratified look. "I wish we'd
thought of applying to them before.
They seem inclined to do the right
thing."

Joab screwed his face into worse
contortions than ever, the minute his
wife's back was turned.

"I s'pose I'm a mis'able sinner," he
thought. "But there! What's a fel-
low to do, with Iris' big, mournful eyes
looking up into mine? I've lied like a
trooper; but I declare to gracious, I'd
do the same thing over again to keep
little Iris out of the asylum."

And looking toward the child, he
said, aloud:

"You'd rather stay with us, Iris,
wouldn't you?"

Iris nestled fondly up to his side.

"You are good to me," said she.

"But I would starve sooner than go to
those people who neglected my poor
mother in her worst need."

So Iris Brooke grew up, wild, lovely,
untrained as her beautiful namesake
along the river shores.

And Mrs. Millson looked out as sharp
as ever for the main chance; and honest
Joab, discouraged by poor crops,
haunted by persistent creditors, and

perpetually puzzled to keep up the
mystery of Iris semi-annual allowance,
scarcely knew which way to turn.

But there never yet was a secret so
profound that a woman will not find it
out. And one unlucky day, Joab was
driven by dire necessity to confess all
to his wife. The bank money was
gone—the mortgage was to be fore-
closed—debts gathered darkly around
them—and the whole conspiracy came
out at last, in its full enormity.

"Do—you—mean," said Mrs. Millson,
with ominous distinctness, "that all
these years you have been supporting
Iris Brooke out of your own money,
and paying for her schooling? And
buying her gowns and bonnets for her,
which were a deal too nice for her sta-
tion in life?"

"Don't speak so harsh, Becky," said
the poor man, faintly. "There was no
one else to do it but me! She has been
a real comfort to us, you know, and—"

"A costly comfort!" Mrs. Millson.
"But it shan't go on another moment.
Oh, how I have been deceived!"

"Don't tell her, Rebecca," faltered
Joab. "It ain't her fault. She never
suspected it."

"It's any one's fault to be living on
charity," shrilly uttered the old woman.
"And us without a cent, and home-
less. How are we to live, do you sup-
pose?"

"The Lord will provide," said Joab,
feebly.

"Fiddlesticks!" said Mrs. Millson.
"You've done all this to keep her out
of the parsonage. Now, who is to
keep you and me off the town, I'd like
to know?"

Just then the door opened. Iris
Brooke herself came in, out of the
breazy, golden November atmosphere,
with an open letter in her hand.

"Oh, father! oh, mother!" she cried,
radiantly, "the day of magic trans-
formation is not over yet. I am not
Iris Brooke any more; I am a good
fairy, and I have brought you money,
wealth, ease and rest, in your old days.
Look! it's a letter from a lawyer in
New York. Uncle Sanford is dead and
he tore up his last will, the week be-
fore he died, and never made a new
one. And I am his heiress. Oh, what
shall I ever do with fifty thousand dol-
lars, money—dearest, best of friends—
but to give it to you, who befriended
me when I was alone and friendless?"

And sobbing with joy, she flung the
letter into Joab Millson's lap, and knelt
down beside him, covering his brown
hand with kisses.

The old man looked exultingly at his
wife.

"Didn't I tell you," said he, "that the
Lord would provide?"

So the matter settled itself; and the
declining years of the old couple were
brightened by the love and devotion of
Iris Brooke. And then, and not until
then, did Joab disclose to her the sys-
tematic deception he had practiced for
so many years.

She looked at him with large, lumi-
nous eyes.

"Dear father," said she, "I can't love
you any more than I did before; but if
I could—"

And the tears ended her sentence in
a torrent of mute eloquence.—Helen
Forest Graves.

For Newspaper Writers.

The following version of the "Con-
tributor's Ten Commandments" is taken
from a Swedish paper:

1. If you wish to send a communi-
cation to a paper, do it at once. What
is new at this moment is no longer so
to-morrow.

2. Be concise in your statement,
for thereby you save your own time
and that of the reader. Explanations,
not words; facts, but no reflections on
them.

3. Be simple. Write distinctly, do
not talk about to-day or yesterday, but
give the name of the day or the date.

4. Begin frequently a new line,
which gladdens the compositor. Write
short sentences, for the benefit of the
reader. Use many stops and commas,
and do not forget to put them in.

5. Do not correct single letters or
numbers